

The Venus Index Reverse Taper Diet

By Brad Pilon and John Barban



TABLE OF CONTENTS:

Preface.....	2
Introduction.....	5
The Theory of Fat Availability.....	10
The Reverse Taper Protocol.....	15
How to Reverse Taper.....	21
C.O.R.E. and Intermittent Fasting	26
C.O.R.E. and Protein Intake.....	33
C.O.R.E. and Muscle Maintenance.....	38
Cheating the system with... Cardio!.....	41
Water: Explaining daily variances in weight.....	45
Conclusions.....	51
Using the Software Program.....	56
Reverse Taper Diet FAQs.....	67
References.....	71

Preface

By [Brad Pilon](#)

Let me keep this brief...

This protocol is not meant to be a replacement for either [Eat Stop Eat](#) or the principles behind the [Anything Goes Diet](#). Instead, this is a step-by-step guide on how to best apply these two nutritional approaches in a way that **optimizes your body transformation** and addresses the changing needs of your body while it's rapidly undergoing a reduction in body fat and maintaining or even increasing your muscle mass.

Listen, after reviewing the transformations from our [Venus Index](#) Body Transformation contests, it became evident that many people needed a more structured approach to dieting during a body transformation.

Remember, while “Eat less and fast once or twice a week” is all the advice some people need to get in unbelievably great shape, it seems as though many people want the ‘guess work’ taken out of their dieting so they can spend the majority of their mental energy on the **actual transformation process** – staying motivated, making sure they are giving 100% in the gym, getting good sleep, etc.

Some even need the rituals and complexity as a way to stay motivated and feel like they are ‘doing something’ productive. If this is you, have faith that **you are not alone**.

As you know, the **frightening problem** we constantly encounter is that much of the traditional dieting advice being postulated online and in the magazines is completely unneeded and may not even apply to you (because you're not using the drugs many fitness models use), and can actually be dangerous at times.

For instance, at *extremely low levels of body fat*, traditional dieting **CAN** lead to a loss of muscle mass, energy, feelings of lethargy, and if left unchecked, even metabolic disorders.

Lucky for you, we've now discovered by adjusting the way you use the principles found within [Eat Stop Eat](#) and the [Anything Goes Diet](#) in a way that matches your changing body (as measured through your Venus Index), you can actually avoid many of the pitfalls most people face during a body transformation diet.

We have also found **you can take the guesswork out of dieting** by using your Venus Index Metrics to guide your calorie intake as you diet. Pretty sweet, huh?

We've named this approach C.O.R.E. and in this manual, we'll explain exactly how to properly use these techniques in order to avoid feeling overly lethargic and tired during your diet as well as how to avoid the need to use more extreme techniques such as re-feeding days, or even prolonged fasting (which many people seem to love flirting with).

Finally, you're about to also discover how using these new theories will help you to maintain your new low body fat percentage – a skill that 99% of transformation diets fail to address (leading to the dreaded and **incredibly misunderstood** “rebound effect”).

I genuinely hope you're as excited to discover these new “truths” as much as we're excited to reveal them to you. We've taken great pains to make this manual as neat, simple, and straight to the point as possible.

In fact, I sincerely hope you can appreciate the “non-fluffiness” of it all. After all, we're not about parading pages just to make this “worth” something. We're only about your **RESULTS**. That's what you want. That's what you've paid for.

Nothing else matters. You know that.

With that being said, **here's John on the basics of C.O.R.E...**

An Introduction to C.O.R.E

By [John Barban](#)

I'm going to start this entire manual off with a bold statement – 98% of all dieting issues come from improper dieting. Muscle loss, fatigue, lethargy, rebounds, bingeing and even some of the more extreme metabolic complications, they all come from improper dieting. And by 'improper,' I mean not following the main principle of this program:

Calorie Optimization.

Calorie Optimization is an approach to dieting where you start with calorie restriction (lower calories) then move to new maintenance levels as you lose body fat. Calorie Optimization is accomplished by following a form of dieting called '**The Reverse Taper Protocol**'

What's the Reverse Taper Protocol? – To answer that, we have to first describe the standard dieting 'taper' protocol.

The typical dieting taper is the style most often used by body builders, fitness models and other people competing in physique contests of various kinds. The traditional diet taper starts with a calorie intake that is roughly 'maintenance' – that is to say the amount of calories it takes to maintain their current weight. Then as the weeks go by they slowly decrease calories as they lose weight.

Depending on the program, there may be calorie cycling, or carb cycling or cheat days, but the one common feature that makes any diet routine a traditional taper is that they end up eating the **LEAST amount of calories when they are at their very lowest levels of body fat.**

BIG MISTAKE.

This style of dieting tends to work for some people, but is generally only really effective when used in conjunction with potentially risky anabolic steroids and powerful drug based fat burning agents. You could even argue that this style of dieting actually **REQUIRES** these sorts of stimulants and drugs to be effective.

When potent drugs are used along with traditional dieting they **FORCE** the body to avoid most of the major problems that non-drug users will encounter when using this style of diet tapering. The two biggest problems we're talking about are:

1. Muscle Loss
2. Fatigue

Yet, even with these powerful effects, the problems of a tradition diet taper can be so severe that even drug users will eventually end up falling prey to two more problems that are even worse than the ones mentioned above.

There are TWO major problems with the standard taper approach:

Problem #1: Even though the traditional taper approach can produce significant decreases in bodyfat, it leaves you with **absolutely no idea how to maintain** at this new level of leanness and as a result you're setting yourself up for a major rebound.

Problem #2: You're eating the least when your **internal energy availability is at an all time low**. Following the theory of fat availability – you simply cannot sustain this large calorie deficit with extremely low body fat! Despite this fact, most people **attempt to reduce their calories to the lowest levels when they have reached their lowest bodyfat levels**. This is when you feel lethargic, lousy and yes – even lose muscle as a result of dieting, or I should say, as a result of *improper* dieting.

Anyone who has ever competing in a fitness contest has seen these two problems in action – muscle loss at the end of a super strict diet, followed by massive weight gain (rebound) after the show.

Dieting incorrectly is what creates the desire (and even the need) to do things like cheat days, calorie cycling and carb cycling. These techniques are a desperate attempt to fix the horrible feeling of a standard taper diet, however this is not necessary. If don't correctly dieting shouldn't feel that bad.

This can easily be fixed by following a completely different pattern of dieting. I believe you must move from calorie excess (too many calories) to calorie restriction (a diet) then slowly move towards calorie optimization (The right amount of calories for the new you). This is an ongoing process that changes every week throughout your diet.

I like to call this entire process the Venus C.O.R.E. approach to dieting – **Calorie Optimization & Resistance Exercise**. With C.O.R.E. you use resistance training to shape your body, while optimizing your calorie intake to create and then maintain your new body.

The C.O.R.E approach is based on the Reverse Taper Protocol, and the Reverse Taper Protocol is based on the *Theory of Fat Availability*, which states it is inevitable that fat loss (but not necessarily weight loss) **will become slower as you get leaner**. So the C.O.R.E approach has the specific goal of matching the calorie deficit you create through diet and exercise to the amount of body fat you currently have on your body.

The point is to create the maximal calorie deficit that can be ‘filled in’ by the calories stored in your body fat.

In other words, with C.O.R.E you're trying to ensure that all of your weight loss comes from your body fat and not muscle mass.

The bottom line is that there is a time and place for rapid fat loss, and **it's at the beginning of your transformation when you have the most fat to lose**. The truth is as you get leaner you should expect your rate of weight loss to slow down while maintaining strength and energy in the gym. If you see this happen then you know you're dieting properly!

It doesn't mean your metabolism is crashing or that you're not eating enough, it means that you've used up enough fat to actually cause a slow down in how much fat you can lose in a day.

Remember, if your weight loss slows down towards the end of your body transformation it means you are losing fat while maintaining your muscle mass. If your weight loss increases in the final weeks of a transformation it could mean the **EXACT** opposite.

Confused? Let Brad Pilon explain...

The Theory of Fat Availability

[Brad Pilon](#)

To explain the theory of fat availability, we have to start with a little bit of basic physiology. Specifically, we have to look at how our body fat actually works.

The main purpose of our body fat is to serve as an 'energy reservoir' for our bodies. In times of caloric excess (overeating) our body fat expands to store energy by one of two processes:

1. **Hypertrophy** (fat cells get bigger in size)
2. **Hyperplasia** (fat cells multiply in number)

They expand to store energy in the form of triglycerides, to be used later as energy to supply our metabolic demands when energy from food is limited (caloric restriction or dieting). In other words, our body fat has the unique ability **to rapidly expand or contract** depending on nutritional status (Energy Surplus or Energy Deficit).

Free fatty acids (FFAs for short) are what is released from adipose (fat) tissue when we need energy. **Notice**, this is happening throughout the day even if you're not dieting; however, it's elevated when we are fasting, exercising or in a caloric deficit (dieting). This is a very good thing since most of us who are dieting and exercising are doing so because we want to decrease the amount of our body fat!

When “fat” is released from your body fat stores, it can end up in a few different places.

- 1.. It can go to the liver and get stored there
- 2.. It gets burned for fuel by other organs (heart, liver, kidneys etc).
- 3.. It simply gets recycled back into your body fat cells to be re-stored. [Thompson BR Mol Cell Endocrinol. 2010; Ahmadian M Int J Biochem Cell Biol 2010]

The simple reality is that all 3 of these processes are happening throughout the day, every day. The major difference when gaining or losing weight will be the percentage of fat being recycled back into fat tissue versus the amount being burned by other organs.

The movement of fat in and out of your fat cells is an extremely important process **that needs to be tightly regulated**. The FFAs that are not burned as fuel must quickly be taken up by the liver or recycled and stored back in your fat tissue.

Excess circulating fat that is not either burned or stored can cause an inflammatory response, which when chronically elevated, can lead to a whole host of health issues and metabolic disease states [Sun K J clin invest 2011]. This is how excess fat and an inability to effectively burn/store the fat contributes to metabolic disorders like adult onset diabetes and heart disease.

And it gets worse. Should this extra fat remain circulating for too long, it can also cause ‘ectopic’ fat storage, which is basically fat being stored in places it shouldn’t be stored (like

your heart and liver). I'm sure you can imagine how this can lead to severe health consequences in the long-term.

As you can see it is extremely important for your body to regulate the amount of fat entering your blood stream.

Basic gist: you cannot have every single one of your fat cells empty out all at once into your blood - the results would be catastrophic!

Each of your fat cells is able to release fats into your blood stream **at a predetermined rate**, and the 'rate' at which an adipocyte can do this is *relatively fixed for your own protection*. It can increase to match the needs created by dieting and exercise, but even during exercise, higher energy needs simply cannot be met by fat (which is why we rely primarily on carbohydrate during high intensity exercise).

The amount of energy your fat can provide when you are dieting is dependent on how much body fat you have. The more body fat you have, the larger the calorie deficit you are able to 'fill' with the energy stored in your fat.

The word 'fill' is actually a good way of describing what your body fat does when you're dieting. When you diet, you create an energy deficit – essentially a gap between the amount of energy you take in, and the amount of energy you're expending on a daily basis. In an ideal world, this gap is filled exclusively by the energy that is stored in your body fat.

However, as you lose body fat, the amount of fat that can be released also decreases. This means most people do dieting wrong, and **specifically, they do it backwards**. The more bodyfat you have, the lower you can go with your calories and longer you can go eating low calories without experiencing any ill effects. But, towards the end of a diet, when body fat levels get lower and lower, the calorie deficit needs to be shorter and smaller.

The time for Rapid Fat Loss

When you are carrying large amounts of excess body fat, you can eat less for longer because your body has plenty of fat to burn as a fuel to 'fill in' your calorie deficit. One way to imagine it is like having a full 'tank' of reserve energy. As your body fat levels decrease you can no longer handle as large a deficit for as long a period of time. This makes sense that the less fat you have to lose, the slower it comes off. **Think of it as having less "taps" to pull from, where each "tap" has a maximum outflow of fats that can be released in any given time period.**

At the extreme low end, when your body fat cannot 'keep up' with the energy deficit you've imposed on your body, the energy **MUST** come from **SOMEWHERE**. This is when you are at risk of losing lean body mass during dieting (commonly referred to as 'starvation mode'). This happens at extremely low levels of body fat, under 6% in men and 12% in women [Friedl K.E. J Appl Physiol, 1994].

When a large energy deficit is maintained while there is limited body fat available, metabolic disturbances such as altered Testosterone, Thyroid and Cortisol levels begin to

take place and negatively affect both your muscle mass, and overall muscle strength [Nindl B.C. Med Sci Sports Exerc, 2007; Freidl K.E. J Appl Physiol 2000].

This is the theory of fat availability – As body fat levels decrease so does your ability to handle a large energy deficit. Most trainers or weight loss coaches are not paying attention to (or are completely unaware of) the Theory of Fat Availability when they design a diet. They end up telling their clients to continually decrease the amount of calories they consume as they get leaner; this leads to a whole host of problems, including feeling sluggish, depressed, moody, a loss of muscle mass, water retention and bloating, metabolic alterations and a general feeling of ‘not wanting to diet or exercise anymore’. [Freidl K.E. J Apple Physiol, 1994; Keys, A. Biology of Human Starvation, 1950; Keys, A. Science Washington, 1946; Taylor H.L. Science, 1950]

The Theory of Fat Availability:

- There is a fixed rate of fat that can be released from a fat cell.
- The more fat you have, the more fat can be used as a fuel when dieting.
- The less fat you have, the less fat can be used as a fuel when dieting.
- Towards the end of a weight loss diet, when body fat is extremely low you may not have enough fat to handle a large caloric deficit anymore.

The Reverse Taper Protocol

By [John Barban](#)

Calories could be the most confusing part of all health and nutrition. After all, if each of us knew how many calories we should be eating, the health and fitness industry would look a lot different.

But this is where the confusion comes in. We **DON'T** really know how many calories we should be eating. We don't know what is optimal and what amount is potentially dangerous. In fact, **many of us don't even really know what a calorie is.**

So to start – a calorie is the amount of energy required to warm one gram of air-free water from 3.5 °C to 4.5 °C at standard atmospheric pressure. In other words, **it's just a way to measure energy.** You can't touch or pick up a calorie and you can't see them. They are a form of measurement, like an inch or a degree. Therefore a **CALORIE IS A CALORIE.** Saying all calories are not equal is like saying an inch of string is longer than an inch of yarn! It's a measurement; it has to be the same by definition.

So what we are dealing with when we talk about calories is really just energy – or more accurately the energy provided through diet. Since your body's total energy needs are made up of the calories (energy) provided by your diet and the calories (energy) provided by your body from it's stores (hopefully your body fat). A “diet” is simply a way to lower the energy being provided from your food in a way that forces the deficit to be filled in by the energy you have stored in your body.

Based on this premise, it does not take a PhD to realize that someone with 5% body fat (dangerously low internal energy stores) should not be eating an extremely low calorie diet for an extended period of time, if at all. Also, someone with 5% body fat really shouldn't even be fasting for any longer than 24 hours **EVER**. Heck, I'm not even sure if a person at this level of body fat should be fasting for weight loss at all (after all, the goal isn't to have *zero percent* body fat).

In order for a diet plan to be effective, you should match your degree of energy deficit up with the degree of fat you have left to lose. The more body fat you have to lose, the larger energy deficit you can work with.

As you start to lose weight, you can start to eat more calories until you've normalized at the end to the amount of calories you need to sustain your new bodyweight. In other words you do the **EXACT** opposite of any other diet. **You start low and end high...or to be more specific you end at 'maintenance'.**

This is the main benefit of Reverse Taper Dieting – not only do you match your calorie deficit to your body fat, but you also slowly increase to the amount of calories needed to maintain your new lean body – this is what we call “Calorie Optimization”. We do **NOT** want you to be on a diet for the rest of your life. We want you to learn how to eat at a level that is “Optimized” for your new body.

Now, here is the real kicker, and the reason that the Reverse Taper Protocol is so important – weight loss will always follow an energy deficit. There is no way around this physiological fact. The less you eat the more weight you will lose. Unfortunately this is even true **if the total deficit is more than the energy your bodyfat can supply.**

Our goal is to achieve and then maintain the maximum rate of **FAT LOSS** while we lose body fat, and not to go over this rate in the false assumption that more **WEIGHT LOSS** somehow means more **FAT LOSS**. This is an important distinction to make. You can still have a deficit larger than what your body fat can fill in, however this is not what you want to do since the energy must come from somewhere else – **often times this means blood sugar and protein sources such as your internal organs and even muscle mass.**

Based on these facts, it's quite obvious that the rate that your body fat can meet your deficit is also the **Optimum Rate of Weight Loss (ORWL)**. You can exceed your ORWL, but doing so will only be due to a combination of transient water loss and lean mass loss. This is the result of ‘crash’ dieting and losing too much size, shape, energy and mass along the way.

You can't just force fat loss to happen faster than your body can handle (not without powerful drugs). Therefore, your goal should be to optimize it and match your calorie deficit with your maximum rate of potential **FAT LOSS** at any given body fat percentage. This maximum rate changes as your body fat percentage changes and for this reason, we suggest a weekly assessment to see what your projected fat loss will be based on your available fat.

Remember, in most cases, you will never be able to eat below your fat availability level until you get noticeably lean. At these higher levels of body fat, it would be nearly impossible to create an energy deficit that exceeds your fat availability.

In fact, this would be near impossible even at what most people would consider a healthy level of body fat. But once you're really lean (close to a visible 6-pack for guys) this becomes a **DAILY** possibility. If you've ever done a transformation or fitness/bodybuilding contest, or know someone who has, **then you know that the highest risk of muscle loss is in the final weeks of the dieting process.**

With the **Reverse Taper Protocol (RTP)**, you start with your lowest calorie intake when you have the highest body fat percentage. As your body fat percentage decreases, you slowly taper up your calories to the point where you end your diet in contest shape **AND** eating a 'maintenance' level of calories. In other words, with the reverse taper, you slowly progress from calorie restriction to calorie optimization and learn how to maintain your new lower level of body fat all while losing the maximum amount of body fat possible. **This is your best defense against rebound weight gain.** And make no mistake about it, MOST competitors and dieters in general experience a rebound weight gain. This is why you hear the stat that goes something like this: "95% of all dieters gain all the weight back". This is because they're following a standard taper protocol instead of the reverse taper protocol.

The bottom line is the leaner you get, **the slower you will lose fat**. This is an extremely important fact you must understand since any 'crash dieting' when you are already extremely lean can result in muscle loss. Slower fat loss does **NOT** mean you've **BROKEN** anything (like your metabolism). The lower your body fat percentage is, the more precise you must be with your calorie intake to avoid lean mass loss.

Actually, many of the bodybuilders and fitness competitors I have worked with will report their bodyweight hardly budging at all in the final 2-4 weeks of dieting for a competition, even though they are still getting visibly leaner. These people have managed to get such a low body fat level, they're now experiencing the slowest rate a human body can possibly lose fat regardless of how 'hard' they try to diet or force it.

When fitness competitors and bodybuilders try to continue dieting hard at these lower body fat levels, they start feeling weak, depleted and exhausted. This is when competitors are also at risk of a rebound binge if they try to push their diet too hard at such low body fat levels. At this time, many attempt to correct the problem with an increased calorie intake day (sometimes called a cheat day or re-feed day) or by cycling their calories or carbohydrates. However, this still doesn't prevent the problem from happening again - **it's just a temporary fix**.

Dieting too hard and trying to force fat loss to happen faster than what's possible is what leads people to believe all of the 'fixes' such as cheat days and carb cycling are necessary and somehow play some sort of metabolic trick on your system. In reality, they were simply

pushing harder than their body could go at the time and **created a need to recover from over-dieting.**

This is also why **RTP** is the pattern of eating I have learned to be most effective for stripping off body fat while teaching people of all shapes and sizes how to maintain their new body size once it's over.

By following **RTP**, you will be starting low and ending higher at your maintenance calorie needs for your new body. This way, you end up slowly learning how to eat for your new size.

By following the theory of fat availability and using a reverse taper for your diet, you slowly eat up to your new calorie requirement. Instead of crashing at the end of the diet, you will eat your way back up to a healthy normal calorie level for your new leaner lighter body.

Reverse Taper Protocol Recap:

- Match the size of your calorie deficit to the size of your body fat stores. (the more fat you have to lose, the bigger the deficit you can sustain)
- Eliminates the tired and lethargic feelings that normally come with crash dieting.
- Eliminates the risk of bingeing and out of control cheat days.
- Ensures that all the weight lost is fat and not muscle.
- Teaches you how to eat to maintain your new, lean body.
- Eliminates the potential for a huge rebound and massive weight regain

How to 'Reverse Taper'

By [John Barban](#)

To follow the C.O.R.E. approach and Reverse Taper Protocol, you need to know how much body fat you currently have. Luckily, we can estimate this **using the difference between your current waist measurement and your ideal golden waist goal.**

Simply put, your waist is the best predictor of overall body fat percentage. It's scalable to height (so it works for all people) and your waist can't be tricked by being overly muscular the way the BMI can. For example, if you're 5'10" with a 40 inch waist, it doesn't matter how much muscle mass you have, at this waist size you're simply carrying too much fat. [Heymsfeild B.S. 2008; Heymsfeild B.S. 2011].

In fact, as with everything related to the Venus Index systems, we will rely on the easy metric of body circumferences to track fat loss, muscle loss, estimated calorie needs and estimated maximal fat loss throughout the dieting process.

Remember, as with everything we discuss, these numbers are rough guidelines; however, I will say that the leaner you get, the more important these numbers become.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

The numbers that our reverse taper protocol software generate for you are meant to be a target that you can shoot for on a daily basis for the week BUT it's not 100% required to hit these numbers every day. You can certainly go below the number given by the software calculator with this simple rule...DO NOT GO LOWER THAN THE GIVEN NUMBER FOR LONGER THAN 3 DAYS IN A ROW.

Using CORE, we will track your weekly measurements and use them to determine your specific:

- A.. Weekly fat loss goal
- B.. Weekly calorie intake goal

[ALWAYS REMIND YOURSELF THESE ARE WEEKLY GOALS, THE DAILY NUMBER WILL FLUCTUATE]

These numbers should serve as your weekly goal for weight loss, and as a rough guide for how many calories you should be eating to reach that goal.

Depending on how much weight you have to lose, there may be periods in the beginning of your diet where it's highly doubtful that you would reach the maximum weight loss goal.

This doesn't mean you are doing it wrong, but rather that the amount of calories your body fat can provide exceeds any reasonable calorie deficit you can create.

As an example, a 250 pound 5'7" woman may have enough body fat to easily handle a 10,000 calorie deficit every single day. Yet, it would be highly unrealistic to expect her to actually **CREATE** a 10,000 calorie deficit every single day. This would require eating zero calories and working out intensely for approximately 10 hours each day. Clearly this is not realistic.

Along the same lines, during the final stages of your weight loss transformation you may be expected to lose a half (or even a quarter) of a pound of fat **PER WEEK**.

This doesn't mean you can't lose **MORE** weight, but it does mean you increase your chances of losing muscle mass, since you simply do not have the body fat stores needed to meet the deficit you create.

As an example, a 5'2 women who is 'stage ready' at 115 pounds may only have a total of 10 pounds of fat on her entire body. This may simple not be enough to supply her needs in an extreme or prolonged deficit.

Don't mistake this for 'starvation mode' – what I am actually referring to here is 'wasting'. Your metabolism is not crashing; rather you simply do not have enough fat to meet the calorie deficit you've created and thus your body will need to find the calories elsewhere – which may end up being drawn from some of the amino acid stores in your muscles.

The bad news is that starvation mode (a lowered metabolism as a result of dieting) **does become a concern** after you have spent time in a greater deficit than your body fat can supply, and as a result have lost mass from vital organs and skeletal muscle. However, **recall** that this is a rare situation in almost all cases **EXCEPT** during the final stages of contest preparation or during times of true famine or starvation.

The good news is if you've somehow dieted so hard that you did manage to lose a bit of muscle mass, you can absolutely gain it back later if you wish to do so. **This is because muscle mass losses are not permanent.**

In the following pages you will find a series of guidelines based on the difference between your current waist and your ideal waist, as well as ways to measure muscle loss and to guide your weight loss through **RTP**. **The goal is to end up as lean as you want AND to understand exactly how to eat to stay lean.**

Also along with this manual, you have access to some web based software which has all the proprietary algorithms we've created embedded to estimate your maximal fat loss and needed calorie intakes. (**NOTICE:** these algorithms are not available other than through this web based software, so please don't ask)

Reverse Taper Recommendations:

- Track your body measurements and use them to guide your overall calorie intake and fat loss expectations each week.
- Depending on the amount of extra fat you are carrying you may not be able to hit the maximal amounts of fat loss available at the beginning stages of your transformation.
- Towards the end of your transformation the levels may seem very low, but remember, this is all in the name of preserving muscle, mood and sanity.
- This has nothing to do with starvation mode, and everything to do with fat availability.
- Use this protocol in order to avoid the risk of weight regain

C.O.R.E. and Intermittent Fasting

By [Brad Pilon](#)

Many of our contest winners have followed the principles within [Eat Stop Eat](#) during their transformations. An interesting observation we've made is that the winners who did use [Eat Stop Eat](#) found their approach to intermittent fasting seemed to change throughout the transformation process.

Just like dieting, the **Theory of Fat Availability** and the **Reverse Taper Protocol** will dictate how long and often you can and should fast. Even before you understood the concept of RTP, you've likely noticed how longer fasts become more difficult as you get leaner.

While many have started their transformations doing multiple 48-72 hour fasts, or by fasting every-other-day, most find once they reach more extreme levels of leanness, two full 24-fasts per week is all they can handle, and some even feel it more appropriate to use only one fast per week.

The move to one fast per week towards the final stages of a diet makes a lot of logical sense considering (as we've said before) the goal isn't to hit zero percent body fat! Rather, we are trying to get lean; then learn how to stay lean.

Finally, it's quite common to hit a point where it's more convenient to switch your fasting length and frequency to be lower than the recommended 24 hours in [Eat Stop Eat](#) down into the 14-18 hour range, and increase the frequency to between 3-5 times per week.

As long as you're keeping your fasting flexible, you're still doing [Eat Stop Eat](#). I won't be offended if you opt to use these shorter length, more frequent fasts during the final stages of your transformation.

A 24 hour fast is still the main and ideal recommendation for most people when we look at the Theory of Fat Availability based on the following points:

1. It is easy to remember (most of us structure our lives around a 24 hour clock)
2. It's not overly intrusive on your life
3. It still allows you to enjoy food every day
4. Given the previous three benefits it still results in a substantial calorie deficit and a shift into fasted state metabolism

However, there is a less obvious reason why 24 hours was chosen as the ideal fasting time for [Eat Stop Eat](#). **It still works as an effective fat loss tool for people who are very lean.**

A 24 hour fast allows for a fairly large calorie deficit with a concurrent shift to a metabolism that burns predominantly body fat as a fuel source, all while still allowing you to eat every single day.

24 hours of fasting spread between two days is not long enough to exceed the deficit that could be filled in with body fat even in very lean people (the exception being bodybuilders and figure competitors at extremely low body fat percentages that cannot be maintained for longer than a few days).

In other words, almost by accident, a 24-hour fast done once or twice a week adheres to the Theory of Fat Availability for the vast majority of the population.

For people with higher body fat levels, it's absolutely possible to fast for longer than 24 hours with little risk of muscle loss. Many people have successfully fasted for 36-48 and even 72 hours. Yet rest assured, this however cannot be maintained as body fat starts to drop.

It seems that in general, people like to experiment with longer fasts at the beginning of their weight loss journey and depending on the total amount of fat there is to lose, this can be a very effective starting strategy. However, if these extended fasts are not adjusted down to shorter durations as body fat decreases, difficulty with the process as well as lethargy, anxiety and rebound eating can be the result.

The reason for this obviously is the **Theory of Fat Availability**.

Based on these findings and our continuing work with the golden ratio, we have created a more succinct guide to fasting for the sole purpose of a body transformation which allows

for longer fasts at the beginning of a transformation, but also sets guidelines for fasting length as you lose body fat.

I should note that I still **do not make a standard recommendation for longer fasts** as part of the ongoing [Eat Stop Eat 'lifestyle'](#), but I completely understand their value in a **short term focused and targeted fat loss transformation.**

Our recommended upper limit for a fast is 72 hours since this is the limit I've found in all of my research. This is also the limit we're comfortable with because different physiological needs and concerns arise with fasts that exceed this mark and are not fully understood in the scientific research.

As a very simple and easy to follow metric – **here are the fasting recommendations for anyone undergoing substantial fat loss:**

- If your current waist is greater than 6 inches above your golden waist the **longest you should fast for is 72 hours.** (I do not recommend fasting for longer than 72 hours ever)
- If your current waist is between 4 and 6 inches above your golden waist the **longest you should fast for is 48 hours.**

- If you are within 1.5 inches of your golden waist, the ***LONGEST*** *you should fast is 24 hours.*

This does not mean that I RECOMMEND these longer fasts, but rather I am providing guidelines and our suggested upper limit to fasting length by connecting it to the Theory of Fat Availability.

Also please note, at extremely lean levels of body fat (contest ready) **even a 24-hour fast may be difficult**. In fact, at levels of 4-5% body fat in men and 10-12% body fat in women I don't really see the point of combining fasting with a calorie deficit – As we said earlier the goal isn't zero percent fat!

It doesn't take a PhD to realize when you're eating in a calorie deficit the 'deficit' must be supplied from an internal body source. If you have minimal body fat other sources must be utilized for energy, namely amino acids pools and lean body mass. While short acute deficits are still possible, a prolonged deficit (either long dieting, or fasting longer than 24 hours) can easily lead to lethargy, loss of energy a host of temporary metabolic changes and possible muscle loss.

At this point I would recommend either 24-hour fasts once or twice a week with very little calorie deficit on the remaining days, or shorter more frequent fasts on the order of 12-16 hours (essentially larger breaks between meals).

From my experience and the available research, I see this as the best approach to using intermittent fasting during a body transformation. You can try longer fasts if you wish during the initial stages of weight loss, but once you start to approach your golden waist, I would expect you to be back to fasting once or twice a week for 24 hours tops. If at this point you want to move even further towards extreme levels of low body fat, you could consider even dropping to 1 fast per week, or reducing the time per fast to below 24 hours.

There is one benefit to fasting during the later stages of RTP. Since weight loss is low relative to the beginning phases, it is hard to figure out the 'right' amount of calories to lose weight. Here is where fasting can help ensure you're still making progress. Generally, the morning of a 24 hour fast is the best time to measure your body weight, and you can be guaranteed that some fat loss occurs during every single 24 hour fast you do. So in the final stages of a transformation, you can use your fasts as your period of fat loss, then the other days as maintenance or very slow fat loss.

Once your new level of leanness is reached, you can experiment with upping your calories on the days you eat until you find a sweet spot that is an enjoyable mix of eating and fasting that allows you to maintain your new body with minimal effort.

Fasting recommendations:

- I do not suggest fasting for longer than 72 hours.
- Extended length fasts (up to 72 hours are OK during the beginning stages of your transformation, but are not advised towards the end of your transformation).
- I would prefer to see shorter more frequent fasts (3-4 16-18 hour fasts) as opposed to less frequent longer fasts (1 100-hour fast per week).
- Our optimal fasting protocol is still 24-hours, once or twice a week.
- As a guide to fasting length while dieting, please use the following metrics:

1. If your current waist is greater than 6 inches above your golden waist the longest you should fast for is 72 hours. (I do not recommend fasting for longer than 72 hours ever)

2. If your current waist is between 4 and 6 inches above your golden waist the Longest you should fast for is 48 hours.

3. If you are within 1.5 inches of your golden waist the LONGEST you should fast is 24 hours.

C.O.R.E. and Protein Intake

By [Brad Pilon](#)

One of the main concerns people have while dieting is figuring out the amount of protein they should be eating. You'll often hear that 1 gram of protein per pound of body weight is a good guideline for muscle gain and fat loss. However, as I've pointed out in "[How Much Protein](#)," **this guideline is overly simplistic** (For instance, why would a 300 pound obese person need 100 grams more protein per day than a 200 pound lean athlete?).

While it's easy to simply use the suggested range found in "[How Much Protein](#)" (70-120 grams per day), it is important to remember that the findings within that book were based on the protein needs for **muscle building**, and did not address the changing needs that may occur **while you are dieting**.

In reviewing the research on the benefits a higher protein diet has on weight loss (mostly the possible effect on satiety), our findings are very similar to the current body of scientific research. For most people the recommended amount of protein found within "[How Much Protein](#)" (70-120 grams) is an excellent starting point for any weight loss program, however the amount of protein you need may actually be **SLIGHTLY** increased as you lose body fat. **And, it may continue to increase the leaner you become.**

While the science behind this increased protein need is at times somewhat theoretical, we still do not know **EXACTLY** how much protein is optimal for muscle mass, weight loss and health. The good news is there is **very little evidence to suggest that slightly increasing**

your protein intake would be detrimental to health, weight loss or muscle growth.

Based on this reasoning it is logical to suggest that a slightly increased protein intake may be beneficial during the body transformation process.

These increased needs can be met in a very simple manner - as you slowly increase your calorie intake using RTP, **you keep your protein intake as a percentage of total calories the same.**

In doing so, a 200-500 total daily calorie increase would result in roughly a 15 to 50 gram increase in daily protein intake depending on the percentage of protein in your diet and assuming you increase all the foods you consume uniformly (in other words, eat all the same stuff, just a few bites more of it at each meal).

However, there is an even simpler way to account for any extra protein needs – either add in one ‘protein based’ meal per day, or simply consume 1-2 servings of a protein supplement per day.

While this may seem very contrary to what most people would expect me to say – **it does come with some common sense logic.**

It is very easy to completely erase your protein guilt while dieting when your day starts with 30-50 grams of protein. It removes the need to really worry about the protein content

of the rest of your meals – this technique can basically remove the risk of overeating in the name of ‘getting enough protein’.

I must stress that **I’m not advocating super high amounts of protein here** – I’m simply suggesting that you add 30-50 grams through the use of protein powder or a lean protein food in order to compensate for the possible increased needs resulting from having very low levels of body fat. To be honest, this is mostly to ensure you get some added peace-of-mind while dieting, because inevitably, you will probably start to worry about muscle loss and whether or not you're eating enough protein to stop it.

A key point I explain in [Eat Stop Eat](#) is how the free fatty acids released from your body fat when you are dieting are ‘protein sparing’. This means they are used preferentially as a fuel source during a calorie deficit and thus prevent the use of muscle as a fuel (hence ‘protein sparing’).

However, when there is not enough body fat available to meet this need, protein may be used as a fuel source (which is the basis of the Theory of Fat Availability) and gives rise to the Reverse Taper Protocol. We compensate for this inability of body fat to make up the total deficit by slightly increasing the protein content in our diets. **Now, you may be wondering why not simply increase the FAT content of our meals**, and to tell you the truth this may also work to some degree, however we cannot discount the small, transient anabolic effect that dietary protein has within our bodies.

Without getting too complicated, the effect of protein on muscle is more than just supplying amino acids for muscle building. Protein also acts as an 'anabolic signal' for muscle growth.

This is still an inexact science, and adding a small amount of protein seems to be the simplest and most effective strategy at this point.

The most important thing to remember when transforming your body is that by following RTP and adding a little extra protein via a protein supplement (or simply high protein foods), you erase any need to worry or stress about your protein intake and you erase the need to start drastically changing your dietary practices while you are dropping your body fat levels.

These two simple solutions will make any weight loss diet easier, and most importantly they will remove much of the guilt, stress and worry when you're thinking to yourself "am I getting enough protein".

Protein recommendations:

- Following the reverse taper diet your protein intake should slowly increase since your total daily calories are increasing.
- Using a protein supplement as a form of dietary 'insurance' will not hurt your diet, and will ease much of the protein worry that occurs in the later stages of dieting.

- You can use high protein foods if you wish (egg whites or chicken breasts) but protein powder tends to be the easiest most convenient way to take care of this need.

C.O.R.E. and Muscle Maintenance

By [John Barban](#)

Maintaining muscle mass is important during any weight loss program. Your muscles create the form and shape of your body you're trying to 'set free' by removing the excess body fat that's hiding it.

For this reason, we have a number of very simple solutions for maintaining and tracking your muscle mass while dieting.

Remember, resistance training is STILL your number one tool for preventing muscle mass losses while dieting. To be blunt: if you're not resistance training while dieting, you are simply dieting wrong.

From here on in, I'm going to assume that you're following a resistance training program while you are cutting down your body fat mass (and I'll assume it's one of the [Venus Index programs](#)). There are several metrics you can use to easily measure any changes in muscle mass and ease any muscle loss worries you may have while dieting.

The Venus Index relies heavily on the shoulder circumference as a measure of overall muscularity – however when dieting down from higher levels of body fat, this number can decrease as body fat is also removed from the chest, shoulders and upper back.

For this reason, we suggest waiting until you are within 4 inches of your golden waist until you use the following techniques to carefully assess any risk of muscle loss.

Use the measurement of your waist circumference to guide your overall weight loss, your shoulder circumference as an indicator of overall muscularity, and your neck circumference as an indicator of muscle loss. **Research has shown that the single best circumference for measuring muscle loss during calorie restriction is the neck circumference** – however this is only valid once a person is already at healthy levels of body fat [Friedl KE, 1994].

Start measuring your neck once you are within 4 inches of your golden waist. At this point, if your neck circumference decreases by more than 1.5 inches, there is an increased chance that you are losing muscle mass, and therefore, you should slightly increase your calorie intake or reduce your overall calorie deficit (less exercise).

At higher levels of body fat, you simply need to trust the combination of resistance training, adequate protein intake and the protein sparing effect of your FFAs (free fatty acids) being enough to prevent any loss of muscle mass. At lower body fat levels (when your waist is within 2 inches of golden) **you can and should use BOTH shoulder and neck circumferences to track changes in muscle mass.**

Recommendations for Gaining/Maintaining Muscle Mass during a Transformation:

Follow Reverse Taper Protocol.

Track your neck measurements – Once you are within 4 inches of your ideal waist any change in your neck circumference that exceeds 1.5 inches loss suggests muscle loss.

Track your shoulder measurement – Once you are within 2 inches of your ideal waist your shoulder measurement should not drop by more than 1.5 inches.

Cheating The System With... Cardio?!?

By [John Barban](#)

Generally speaking, the effectiveness of cardio or any long-duration, low-intensity exercise as a tool for weight loss has been overstated.

People who rely on cardio to create their calorie deficit tend to have a difficult time losing weight. Adding too much cardio can create a problem achieving your weight loss goals, especially if you add too much cardio at the beginning of your transformation when you're heaviest (creating the very real risk of burnout, injury, and overtraining; thus ruining your transformation goals). However, long-duration, low-intensity exercise does have some unique properties that allow it to be used strategically during a body transformation.

During the final stages of a transformation when body fat stores are at an all time low, the amount of fat you can effectively expect to lose can drop to well below a pound per week. At this point, low-intensity exercise has the unique ability to increase the amount of calories you burn in a day, while also increasing the amount of calories that your body fat can supply.

The effect on the scale would still be small, but at this level of body fat, most of the results will be seen in the mirror - and this is where low-intensity exercise seems to shine.

Towards the end of a transformation when your body fat levels are approaching their lowest levels, you will find it increasingly difficult to create a large calorie deficit from calorie restriction alone.

If you try to continue to eat less and less total calories while your body fat levels are dropping, you will eventually succumb to lethargy, irritation, a lack of motivation, decreasing strength in the gym, and overall exhaustion. The exact mechanism of what is going on is unknown at this point. What we can say for certain is that as you approach your lowest body fat levels, you will find it exceedingly difficult to sustain a large calorie deficit.

As you approach 10% body fat and below, you will likely find you need to eat up to your metabolic maintenance level almost every day to feel energetic and functional both in the gym and throughout your daily routine. At this point, almost all of your calorie deficit required for fat burning will likely have to come from exercise and activity.

This means the calorie burning that will continue to reduce your body fat levels will come from your strength training workouts ([Venus Index workouts](#)) as well as any low intensity longer duration cardio you choose to add to it.

You may notice that I'm speaking **specifically of low intensity cardio here**, and for good reason. As your body fat levels approach 10% and lower, **you'll find you have a limited reserve of high intensity vs low intensity effort** you can exert in the gym. In other words, you may only have 5-6 hours per week of high intensity effort you can pour into any given workout and I would rather you put that effort into your strength training program instead of high intensity cardio.

Trying to force more high intensity effort into some form of HIIT training, other high intensity cross training or even plyometrics can easily lead to overtraining, fatigue, injury, or even full on sickness.

At this point, you must stay keenly aware of how your body feels and how to manage your high and low intensity energy.

The simplest way to look at it is like having two gas tanks. One of them is your high intensity fuel for the week, and the other is your low intensity fuel for the week. Based on your current conditioning and how busy the rest of your life is, you will quickly find out how many hours of reserve 'fuel' you have in each tank.

Most people find that they can handle approximately 5-7 hours per week of high intensity training combined with another 4-6 hours of low intensity cardio training. **This is assuming you have a life outside of the gym** including a job/school, as well as family and/or relationship commitments and of course a functioning social life.

In other words, there is going to be an upper limit to how often you can push to your max effort before you go over the edge. Try to focus your high intensity reserve energy for your weight training workouts and add in low intensity cardio to tap into more body fat stores to drive down your body fat levels **without burning out your system.**

Low-Intensity Exercise Recommendations:

- %LKeep it light, and use it as a way to sneak some added fat loss in the final phases of your transformation (final 4-6 weeks)
- %LResist the temptation to really 'push it' during your cardio and turn it into a high intensity workout...this will lead to overtraining, and possibly sickness or injury faster than you think
- %LSave your high intensity effort for weight training
- %LPay attention to your body and add cardio when you can
- %LStart with 30 min sessions 2-3 times per week working up to 45-60 min sessions 4-5 times per week at max
- %LCardio sessions can be added to the end or beginning of a weight training workout or done during as a separate workout on the same day as your weight training or on a separate day from weight training

Water: Explaining daily variances in weight

By [John Barban](#)

Your body is approximately 70% water. The amount of water you currently carry will depend on the amount of food you've recently eaten, how much sodium you've taken in, how much water you routinely drink, and how often you consume items with a diuretic effect such as coffee.

On any given day your bodyweight can likely fluctuate up to 5-7lbs one direction or the other simply based on the food and beverages you've consumed and if you've recently gone to the bathroom or not!

Bodyweight is a transient measurement (it can change throughout the hours and days) and body water is the most influential factor that affects your body weight on a moment to moment basis.

As an example of how much water affects bodyweight, you can look to bodybuilders and fitness competitors who take powerful diuretic drugs to prepare for a contest. In some cases these people can lose anywhere from 10-20lbs of water in less than 24 hours! Yes you read that correctly, **up to 20lbs in 24 hours**, and this is happening in people who already have extremely low bodyfat levels.

At these levels, it can be quite dangerous to lose this much water, as there is a critical essential amount of water your body needs to function properly (there have been deaths in bodybuilding that were attributed to the abuse of diuretics).

What many people don't realize is when you have excess body fat to lose such as people in the 'overweight' or 'obese' BMI levels, **there is also excess body WATER that you also need to lose**. As you start reducing body fat levels, you'll also experience a reduction in body water. This will make it appear you're losing fat faster than your calorie calculations would suggest.

When you're transforming your body and tracking your changes, you must be aware that there's a difference between your expected total **WEIGHT** loss vs your expected total **BODY FAT** loss. A loss of body fat will obviously cause a loss of body weight, **however it will not be a 1:1 ratio**. In most cases you will lose more total weight than what is accounted for by fat until you get to very low bodyfat levels.

You've likely heard that a pound of body fat contains approximately 3500 calories worth of energy given that 1 gram of fat contains 9 calories. For the most part this is true, however the calculation that leads us to 1 gram of fat containing 9 calories is for dietary fat (dietary fat refers to the fat that we eat). **The fat contained on your body has a slightly different composition and it does not necessarily have exactly 9 calories per gram**. There are other components that make up your body fat mass, including an associated accumulation of water.

Your body fat is made up of adipose tissue, **which contains 'mostly' fat**, but also has a small amount of protein and carbohydrate, as well as a component of water retention. In fact, the more fat mass you have on your body, the more total body water you are carrying along with it.

This is likely do to multiple factors, **including a low grade inflammation signal from excess body fat stores**, as well as the fact that all the cells of your body have some amount of water between them. In other words, the more body fat cells (fat) you have, the more space your body has for excess water around those cells. This is essentially excess water your body does not need. This can be considered 'water retention'.

As you start to lose body fat, you'll also lose this excess body water. In fact it's common for people to lose much more body weight than their diet would suggest is possible from body fat alone. For example, if you structured your diet to achieve a 3500 calorie deficit this week, you'd expect to lose approximately 1lb of BODY FAT.

However, depending on how much fat you have to lose, **you could easily see a 2-3lb total WEIGHT loss over the week due to a loss of fat as well as excess body water that was associated with the fat.**

In this case, 1lb of that weight is coming from body fat, while the extra 1-2lbs of total weight loss are coming from a reduction of total body water. This is a good thing because both the excess fat and water are not healthy and are hiding your muscles.

As a general rule, this excess body water loss will inflate the total amount of weight loss you should expect to see during the beginning stages of your transformation. Remember, as you approach lower body fat levels, **the difference in the amount of total weight loss vs the amount of expected fat loss will shrink [IMPORTANT]**.

Once you are close to 12-13% body fat, it's likely that most of the excess water is gone from your body and any further weight loss at this point is coming predominantly from body fat loss.

This is where total weight loss seems to slow down and part of what many people mistake as 'starvation mode' or a slowing of the metabolism. In reality, you have simply lost all of your excessive body water and now you're truly down to the final stages of pure fat loss without excess body water loss. **What you're seeing is the true rate of pure fat loss.**

In fact, you should view this slowing of your weight loss as a sign that **you're approaching your final lean look**. Once you get to 10% body fat and start to go below this level, any further fat loss may not even be detectable as weight loss at all.

At this level of leanness, your weight will still fluctuate up and down during the days and weeks due to changes in water levels, and the weight of the food you are eating. This makes it very difficult to track your progress using the scale alone.

In these final stages, any further fat loss will likely only be measurable in the mirror as even your waist and other circumferences may not change much anymore. **This is an effect that bodybuilders and fitness models have learned to expect.**

Many of our past winners have also reported that at the very final stages of their transformations they get visible and detailed 6-pack abs while their waist measurement barely moves. They report getting a leaner look in the mirror on a daily basis, even though their weight was not changing.

Towards the end of a transformation and you can occasionally fluctuate up by a pound or two, without actually gaining any body fat, and also suddenly drop by a pound or two without any rhyme or reason. A perfect example of how 'weight' is a lie, and fixating on it too much can ruin a transformation.

Water weight recommendations:

- %L Allow for fluctuations in bodyweight that are solely the result of changes in water weight.
- %L As an average, account for a water 'flux' equal to about 2.5% of your current body weight.
- %L This flux may occur as a drop or a transient increase in body weight. In general this creates a range of acceptable daily weight, putting 50% of the extra water weight above or below your current weight

Conclusions

By [John Barban](#)

By now, it should be obvious that there is a time and place for rapid fat loss – **and it's typically at the beginning of your body transformation.** Throughout your transformation, your fat loss will taper down as your calories taper up - this is the basis of the **Reverse Taper Protocol.**

The bottom line is that a body transformation can be simple when you use the C.O.R.E. principles and the **RESULTS** from your body transformation can last a lifetime **because you will learn how to eat for your new body.**

The specific food options, times of day, and general eating patterns are your choice and they must be your choice in order to match up with your lifestyle constraints and for this to stick over the long term. During your transformation, the calorie and protein recommendations based on the C.O.R.E principles are the main driver that will cause the change in your body.

After you've transformed, it will be your specific food choices and eating patterns that will make it a sustainable lifestyle. Nobody can choose this for you as it must fit with your specific lifestyle wants and needs.

Anything Goes Diet (AGD)

My best recommendation for choosing an effective and customized eating pattern comes from the principles in my nutrition system called "[The Anything Goes Diet](#)" or "AGD" for short.

You can use many of the principles found within [AGD](#) to make sure your transformation is a success, and in fact they're designed to fit with C.O.R.E. and the Reverse Taper Protocol.

As a quick review of the [AGD Principles](#), these are the things you will need to have a successful body transformation:

1. **Know Your Body** – You will need to know your waist measurement, your neck measurement your shoulder measurement as well as your height and weight.
2. **Calorie Guessing** – From now on, assume you're eating 10-15% more calories than your labels say, and assume you're burning 10-15% less calories than any machine or calculator says...**DON'T SKIP THIS STEP!**
3. **Make Your Lists** – Make your three critical lists: Hot button foods, Can do and Can't do without lists. Write these out by hand and post them somewhere so you see them every morning before starting your day (for some reason this makes it feel more real than typing it on a computer)

4. **Recruit Your Body Transformation Team** – Get your team of friends/family/coaches together and explain your goal and what kind of support you need them to provide. This can be as simple as a texting buddy who helps hold you accountable to your plan when you feel like cheating on your diet, or as involved as a workout partner you will meet at the gym. Most people use our online community ([Venus Index Community](#)) to help in a significant way as well. You were given unlimited lifetime access to one with your purchase. Log in today and get in the game!

5. **Take a Picture** – In order to track your progress you need to only compare yourself to yourself. You can do this by taking a ‘before’ picture and use this as part of your motivation to make this change. Take a follow up picture each month so you can see your progress. Remember, towards the end of your transformation your scale weight will not be moving much and you will have to rely on your actual ‘look’ to track your progress.

6. **Write Down Your Goals** – Write down your short and long term weight loss goals. The only way to make your weight loss and body transformation dream a reality is to set these goals and hold yourself accountable to them. Stick to these goals only, and don’t get sidetracked thinking about lifting really heavy weights, or trying to run a marathon. Performance goals are something else you can focus on after you’ve transformed your body. Be specific and focused with your transformation goal. (remember goal hijacking?)

7. **Write Down Your Rewards** – Write out what you will reward yourself with when you reach each of your short and long term goals. Rewards are **IMPORTANT**, and you deserve them. A special reminder: Food is **NEVER** a reward. You should never use food as a reward for transforming your body. Instead choose rewards that match what you've done with your body: For example new clothes that fit your new body.

This is the snapshot of the [principles from AGD](#) we want you to follow during your transformation. Forget macronutrient ratios, nutrient timing, cheat days and the specific glycemic index of carbs.

As we've said before, focusing on these technical and highly irrelevant items is **simply a band aid for improper dieting**. Following a proper reverse taper diet removes the need to use any of these overly complicated dieting techniques.

Eat Stop Eat (ESE)

Fasting is still an exceptional way to lose weight and will make your transformation remarkably easy. Especially if you remember the main principles behind [Eat Stop Eat](#):

1. **Keep your fasting flexible** – If you don't feel like fasting, you don't have to.

Fasting is a component of your transformation, but not the **ONLY** part. It's a tool to use when the timing is right for you.

2. **Don't use fasting as a punishment** – Negative reinforcement does not work well with regards to dieting. Each fast you complete should be a mini **WIN** in your week, not a punishment for 'bad eating' the day before.
3. **Almost everyone can fast for 16-24 hours, but only people with a certain amount of extra body fat can fast for longer periods.** If you are experimenting with longer fasts, you will have to taper them down as you get leaner.
4. **If you choose to use ESE during your transformation,** you may find that you prefer shorter fasts in the 14-18 hour range to be more manageable compared to the main 24 hr fast recommendation as you get towards the end of your transformation and approach your leanest body fat levels.

Combining the principles of the [Anything Goes Diet](#) and [Eat Stop Eat](#) are pretty much what the vast majority of our previous transformation winners have done to achieve their amazing results.

Now, if you add in the "Reverse Taper" and the C.O.R.E. philosophies we've revealed in this manual, you have everything you need for a personalized, structured transformation that is completely customized to your changing calorie needs, and to your own personal eating preferences.

Using the Software Program

By [John Barban](#)

We have created a set of algorithms based on the available science and the data from our previous contest winners to create a piece of personalized software to create calorie guidelines, weight loss guidelines as well as final weight and body metric estimates all based on your current bodyweight and body measurements.

All you need to do is input your age, height, weight, waist circumference and shoulder circumferences into the Transformation Eating Plan Programmer and you will get your weekly estimated calorie needs, your weekly estimated maximum achievable body fat loss, and your expected weight fluctuation range.

As your body changes each week you will re-enter your measurements on a weekly basis and the program will give you a new set of calorie recommendations and body fat loss target. It will also give you a new water weight fluctuation to look out for. Each week you should record your suggested numbers and how close you are to hitting them. This program will outline your maximum rate of total fat loss and ability to change the look and shape of your body without sacrificing lean body mass.

The Inputs:

Height:

Height is meant to be entered in inches. For example if you're 5 feet 4 inches tall you would enter "64" not "5'4".

Weight:

Weight is meant to be entered in pounds, if your scale measures to the first decimal place then you can add that into the calculator as well. For example if your scale says you are 140.5 pounds then you can go ahead and enter the extra .5 into the calculator here, don't round to 140 and don't round up to 141, be specific with the data you enter.

Waist:

Waist circumference is a measurement meant to be entered in inches. Do not pinch the measuring tape tighter than it should be and on the same note don't leave it dangling loose either. The tape should be 'snug' but not pinching in. It is also important that you take this measurement while standing in good posture with your abdomen in a neutral position. This means you're neither actively sucking your abdomen in nor are you forcefully pushing it out. Do not round up or down on this measurement, the calculator will work with fractions of an inch...for example you can enter a waist of 31.5 or 31.2 if that is what the tape measurement says....do not round down to 31 and do not round up to 32.

Shoulders:

Shoulder circumference is a measurement meant to be entered in inches while standing in good posture, chest out, shoulder back, head up. Shoulder measurement is likely to move slowly so measuring to the first decimal place will be important ie: if your shoulder measurement is 39.5 inches, then make sure you put exactly 39.5, don't round up to 40 and don't round down to 39.

The Outputs:

Ideal Waist:

The calculator has several outputs and I will explain each one in more detail here. The first output is your ideal or 'golden' waist circumference for your height. This number is accurate for most people unless you are very tall or very short. Most women under 5'9 and over 5'0 should fit very closely with this ideal golden waist calculation.

Ideal Shoulders:

The ideal or 'golden' shoulder measurement is a calculation based off of your ideal waist. This number holds for most women as does the waist calculation. Some very tall men might find themselves to be slightly under this and short men might also find they could come in above this number.

Ideal Weight Range:

The ideal weight output is a range that approximates 98% of the population at their golden numbers. This means that almost all men will fall within this ideal weight range when they hit their golden numbers on waist and shoulders. Your genetic predisposition for being bigger, average, or thinner will determine where you fall within this range. It's extremely rare for a man to hit his ideal golden numbers outside of this weight range.

Best Estimate Target Weight:

The information you input into the calculator will determine what your best estimate target weight is by simply finding the middle of your ideal weight range. As you move towards your ideal body proportions it's likely that you will approach this target weight number. It's perfectly normal to be a few pounds above or below this number depending on genetic predisposition for muscle mass. Most guys of average build with average muscle mass will approach this target weight number very closely.

Suggest Daily Calorie Intake:

This is a daily calorie total that we suggest is optimal for you to eat for the purpose of burning fat without losing lean body mass. This number will change based on the data you enter into the calculator each week so you must be accurate with your measurements. Be specific and honest with your data input into the calculator, that means if you're waist is 34.5, then enter 34.5 do not round down to 34. There is a minimum number of calories that

the calculator will not go below, this doesn't mean that you cannot eat below this number on a given day. However the target number it gives you is meant to be viewed as a daily rolling average for the week. In other words you can go slightly below this number today if you want and go slightly above it tomorrow. Also you can go below this number for 2-3 days as long as you come back up to it at least every 3 days. But you should resist the urge to just push calories lower and lower because you will risk losing lean body mass. In general the goal is to be averaging the daily calorie total number the calculator gives you for the week. Once you achieve this average you will be optimizing your fat loss without losing lean body mass.

For example if the calculator gives you a suggestion of 1500 calories per day for this week then you can view this as the average of 1500 calories x 7 days for the week or 10,500 for the week. Some days you may eat only 1200 calories, and other days you may eat 1800 calories. As long as you hit approx 1500 per day on average for the week you are doing ok.

A special note about daily calories.

You may want to test going a bit lower than the total daily calories our calculator suggests and this is fine. BUT do not go lower than this total for longer than 3 days in a row if at all. The recommendation given by the calculator should fit for most people, however we all have a slightly different individual need. Use the daily calorie suggestion given by the calculator as

your best starting point and be strict with hitting this number for at least a week, then assess how it worked. If you feel like it wasn't enough calories adjust up by 200 calories for the following week. If on the other hand it felt like too many calories adjust down by 200 calories for the following week. This should be enough of an adjustment to see a change and determine what your specific calorie total is. For most people the recommendation will either be right on or within 200-300 calories of what your specific needs will be. You like where the calorie total is but want to get a bit more fat loss without dropping calories you can add cardio to your workout routine. In general I would test adding 3-4 steady state low intensity cardio sessions at approx 45 mins each for the week. This should be enough extra calorie burn to stimulate more fat loss without overstimulating your appetite. Keep in mind this extra cardio will only aid in fat loss if you don't overcompensate and eat more. It should only take 2-3 weeks of testing more or less calories (approx 200 up or down from the total the calculator gives you) and 1-2 weeks of added cardio (3-4 45 min steady state low intensity cardio sessions) to nail down your weekly routine to burn fat at the maximum rate your body and lifestyle will allow.

Maximum Possible Weekly Fat Loss:

This is your projected maximum possible weekly FAT loss that you can achieve without losing lean body mass or affecting other body tissues. It's important to note the distinction between FAT loss and WEIGHT loss. You can easily lose more WEIGHT than FAT in a given week, and when you have a significant amount of fat to lose (in excess of 20-30lbs) you can expect to lose significantly more WEIGHT per week than the projected amount of FAT this

calculator suggests. This is because as we lose excess fat mass we'll also lose excess water.

Once you start approaching your ideal weight you will have less excess water to lose and your total weekly WEIGHT loss will start coming close to and in some cases will match your suggested weekly FAT loss.

For example if you have 50lbs of excess fat to lose, the calculator may say that you can lose up to 4-5lbs of FAT per week, but you may find that you actually lose 7-8lbs of total body WEIGHT in the first week of your diet. As long as you follow the calorie totals that the calculator has given you, the total weight loss you are experiencing will be a mix of bodyfat and excess water, but it will not be a loss of muscle mass.

As you get leaner and close in on your ideal numbers the total amount of weight lost per week will approach the projected fat loss number until every pound you lose is 100% fat.

This is likely only to happen when you are below 15% bodyfat.

It is also worth noting that this output is your suggested MAXIMUM POSSIBLE weekly fat loss. This does not mean that you are guaranteed to hit this number every week. It means if you followed everything properly this is the maximum fat loss you could expect without affecting your lean body mass, your energy in the gym or daily routine, and without having other adverse reactions that come with crash dieting. Always remember that the purpose of this calculator and the C.O.R.E. principles is to optimize the process of fat loss while eliminating the possibility of a crash and rebound or loss of muscle mass.

In other words, if you're already close to your ideal body measurements the total suggested maximum weekly fat loss will be a relatively small number. You may feel tempted to force it to happen faster than this number is indicating...but I can assure you, giving in to this temptation would be a mistake.

As you close in on your target body proportions the fat loss must happen slowly if you want it to be sustainable. This is a fact you will have to accept to make the changes stick. A lack of patience at this stage of the game will cause you to second guess yourself and attempt all kinds of screwy dieting techniques. Don't let this happen. Instead, accept that the process slows down at the end, but appreciate that you get to eat more calories at this stage so it shouldn't feel as arduous.

The daily calorie total is set based on your current bodyfat levels and the suggested maximum possible weekly fat loss is also set based on your current bodyfat levels. With that said, you will need to do a significant amount of exercise in order to hit your maximum weekly suggested fat loss. You cannot simply diet off all of the fat without it affecting the rest of your body, your energy levels, and your lean body mass. This means that you have two jobs to do:

First job: You must hit the calorie totals the calculator suggests

Second job: You should be adding a mix of resistance training and cardio exercise to enhance fat loss and muscle gaining or muscle maintenance.

If you have a significant amount of fat (more than 50-60lbs) to lose the suggested possible fat loss will likely exceed the amount you can actually lose unless you did 5-7 hours of exercise every day. This doesn't mean that you should in fact exercise 7 hours per day, it just means you theoretically could without losing muscle mass.

On the other hand, when you are getting leaner and closer to your golden measurements (within 2-3 inches on the waist) you will notice the calculator giving you a calorie total that

is approaching or right at your daily energy expenditure maintenance level. You will also find that your weekly maximum possible fat loss will be very low (after all anyone who is very close to or right on golden numbers theoretically shouldn't have much fat at all to get rid of). At this level you will have to rely on your workouts to create a higher proportion of your caloric deficit.

When you're very close to your golden numbers you cannot simply 'diet off' the fat anymore per se. In order to feel vigorous in the gym, maintain and build muscle mass, and feel energetic throughout the rest of your day you will need to eat up to maintenance every day and use strategic weight training and cardio sessions to burn the remaining fat off. This is the whole point of the reverse taper system and how it builds a sustainable habit and lifestyle.

Possible Daily Water Weight Fluctuations:

This output will change based on how much bodyfat you are carrying. Simplest way to think about this is the more fat you have the more water you have, and thus the greater your daily water fluctuations will be. As you get leaner your water fluctuations will likely shrink to a smaller range. This is all part of what to expect as you tighten up and lean down

your body. This is also to remind you that towards the very end of your transformation your weekly possible fat loss will be well below your daily water fluctuations. When your projected weekly fat loss dips below 1lbs per week it's likely that you will not be able to use the scale and your bodyweight as a true measure of progress anymore. At this point you will need to rely on the mirror, measurements, and how your clothes fit to truly assess how much you are progressing. In fact at the very end, even the tape measure will stop moving and you will only have the look in the mirror to assess your changes...but the final look in the mirror is what we're all after anyway. In other words, when you get to the point that the scale and the tape measure are not moving anymore and the only way to see progress is in the mirror...well you've arrived, this is and has been the goal all along! At this final stage of 'mirror changes' you're refining the work of art that is your body!

Longest Suggested Fasting Period:

This output doesn't mean that you must fast for the length of time suggest (or that you should be fasting at all for that matter), rather it is here to show you what you COULD do if you choose to fast. As you may have guessed the more fat you have to lose the longer the fast that is doable. We know that some people have experimented and used longer fasts of 48 and up to 72 hours with great success during the initial stages of a big weight loss transformation. Towards the end of a transformation when there is much less fat to lose these longer fasts become impractical and the calculator will adjust this recommendation as your inputs change. If you are going to use fasting as part of your weight loss strategy this output will suggest how long your fasts can be without adversely affecting your results.

*****CLICK HERE TO WATCH VIDEO TUTORIAL OF SOFTWARE*****

Login to your cockpit for access to the Software Program ==> [Venus Index Reverse](#)

[Taper Diet Programmer](#)

Frequently Asked Questions

Q- How do I measure my waist?

Waist measurement is to be taken at the narrowest point of your waist, typically just under the rib cage. Stand in good posture with your chest out and shoulders back, don't suck your abdomen in, but don't push it out either, take a 'neutral' position with your abdomen.

Q- How do I measure my shoulders?

Shoulder circumference is taking at the widest point of your shoulders as viewed from the front. Line up the measuring tape with the top of your armpit. The tape goes all the way around your upper body (like a belt) so it will go around your shoulders, upper chest, and upper back. Stand with good posture, chest out and shoulders back to take this measurement. This measurement should be taken above your breasts so their size will not affect this measurement.

Q- How do I measure my neck?

Take your neck measurement at approximately the mid level of your neck, this is also a circumference as if you were putting a tie or scarf around your neck. Stand with good posture and your head up when you take this measurement. Make a note of the exact level where you took this measurement so you can be consistent when you take this measurement again in the future for a comparison.

Q- My waist is already below my golden waist, what should I do?

This depends on your shoulders. If your waist is already below golden, and your shoulders are at or near golden, then you should pat yourself on the back because you are where you need to be. Concentrate on maintaining this level with as little work as possible.

If your shoulders are more than 3 inches below your golden shoulders, then your goal should not be weight loss, but rather muscle gain.

Q- Is there any specific tricks to eating during the different phases of the Reverse Taper Diet

There are no 'tricks' involved with the reverse taper dieting principle. This is a straight forward approach based on the current scientific evidence of fat availability as well as our observation and data collection from all of our contest winners and other clients. You can choose to eat the foods you like throughout the entire diet as long as it fits within the calorie recommendations given.

Q-Any reason to take a BCAA drink during the day while fasting or during a workout while fasting? Does it have any benefit?

Not that we have seen – while BCAAs have enjoyed a large resurgence these last couple years, this seems mostly due to the fact that people needed something to sell to people who were fasting. In general, any noticeable or measurable effect of BCAAs has been lacking.

Q- Post recovery protein after a workout while fasting: does it benefit to time my workout around the end of a 24hour fast so I can have some protein after?

Here's the thing with post workout meals - we tend to get hungry when we're used to eating.

So if you're used to having a post workout meal, chances are you're going to notice if you skipped it. So you may feel like you 'need it'. But really, I doubt it makes much of a difference in your transformation. The idea that nutrient availability (protein, calories and carbs) within the first 24 hours after a workout is the substrate for repair (and hence, growth) is a commonly held belief that is largely unsubstantiated. Chances are, other than the mental part of it 'not feeling right,' I don't think you are going to notice a difference either way.

Q- What about fasted Cardio?

The advantage to fasted state cardio is that the fasted metabolism increases fat availability, while the cardio increases fat oxidation. There is a definite time and place for fasted state cardio, however from our experience it is best used towards the end of a transformation.

Q- What about cheat or refeed days? Do you guys hate them or what?

Generally I think refeed days are overused. But, they do have value. When you are dieting, it's fairly easy to tell when you need a cheat day. Forget all the hormone mumbo jumbo you find on the internet and just go with your head. There are going to be times when you feel

as though you are 'burning out' on your diet. This is the perfect opportunity for a cheat day or refeed day. So I'm not against them, but I do not like seeing them 'structured' into a diet. Basically, eat a little more when you feel the need to eat a little more – but only do so as a way to preserve and maintain your diet in the long run.

Q- How does calorie or carb cycling fit into the Transformation Diet Plan?

If you follow the principle of reverse tapering correctly then you shouldn't really need to do any calorie or carb cycling by definition. You can however have higher and lower calorie days as it fits your schedule. This is something most people do inadvertently based on social commitments, work schedule, and training volume. Most people don't eat exactly the same amount of calories and carbs every day, but rather it naturally cycles higher and lower throughout each given week. The key is to stay within your suggested daily calorie average for the week as a whole, any given day can be slightly above or below the average.

References

Thompson B.R. Fatty acid flux in adipocytes: the in's and out's of fat cell lipid trafficking. *Mol Cell Endocrinol* 2010 Apr 29;318(1-2):24-33

Ahmadian M. Lipolysis in adipocytes *Int J Biochem Cell Biol* 2010 May;42(5):555-9

Sun K *J clin invest* 2011

[Friedl K.E. Lower limit of body fat in healthy active men *J Appl Physiol*, 1994].

Taylor. *The Biology of Human Starvation*. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1950, vol. I.

Keys, A., H. L. Taylor, O. Mickelsen, and A. Henschel. Famine edema and the mechanism of its formation. *Science Wash. DC* 103: 669-670, 1946.

Taylor HL and Keys A. Adaptation to caloric restriction. *Science* 112: 215–218, 1950.

[Nindl BC](#), [Barnes BR](#), [Alemany JA](#), [Frykman PN](#), [Shippee RL](#), [Friedl KE](#). Physiological consequences of U.S. Army Ranger training. [Med Sci Sports Exerc.](#) 2007 Aug;39(8):1380-7.

CAIOZZO, V. J., R. E. HERUUCK, and K. M. BALDWIN. Response of slow and fast muscle to hyperthyroidism: maximal shortening velocity and myosin isoforms. *J. Appl. Physiol.* 263:C86-C94, 1992.

AAKvAAo, A., T. SAND, P. K. OpsTAD, and F. ForINmEt. Hormonal changes in serum in young men during prolonged physical strain. *Eur. J. Appl Physiol.* 39:283-291, 1978.

FRIEDL, K. E., R. J. MOORE, R. W. HoYr, L. J. MARCHTELLi, L. E. MARTINEz-LoPEz, and E. W. AsKEw. Endocrine markers of semistarvation in healthy lean men in a multistressor environment. *J. Appl. Physiol* 88:1820-1830, 2000.

OpsTAD, P. K. Androgenic hormones during prolonged physical stress, sleep, and energy deficiency. *J. Clin. Endocrinol. Metab.* 74:1176-1183, 1992.

Heymsfeild SB 2008

Heymsfield SB, Heo M, Pietrolbelli A. Are adult body circumferences associated with height? Relevance to normative ranges in circumferential indexes. Am J Clin Nutr 2011; 93:302-7

Friedl KE, et al. Lower limit of body fat in healthy active men. J Appl Physiol 77(2): 933-940, 1994



